

REMARKS

Applicant has carefully reviewed and considered the Office Action mailed on October 28, 2003, and the references cited therewith.

No claims are amended, cancelled, or added; as a result, claims 1-58 remain pending in this application.

§102 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 1, 2, 4-9, 16-22, 29, 30 and 32-37 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Ekstedt et al.(U.S. 5,206,582).

Ekstedt describes a control system for automated parametric test equipment, including the ability to define and execute test sequences on such equipment. Ekstedt further teaches, as in the cited Figure 9's element 76, sequential control of both semiconductor test equipment such as a wafer loader, and parametric test equipment such as a prober.

Ekstedt fails, however, to teach concurrent control of operation of both semiconductor test equipment and parametric test equipment. Explicit sequential operation of such steps is recited, e.g. in col. 10, ln. 34-37, which recites "At the completion of this step, the general test program performs any necessary initialization of the wafer prober and displays alignment information". Eckstedt therefore operates very much like the prior art system of Figure 1 of the pending application, as described on pages 4-5 of the specification.

In contrast, the present invention claims a semiconductor parametric test system in which concurrent control of both parametric test equipment and semiconductor test equipment is performed. Attention is drawn specifically to page 5 of the specification, which is drafted to clearly explain how concurrent control applied to certain example embodiment of the present invention differs from prior art such as that of Eckstedt or of Figure 1 of the present application. As the paragraph beginning at p. 5, ln. 20 indicates, the added programming and design complexity of a concurrently controlled system can result in significant improvement in efficiency over a traditional system such as that of Eckstedt or of prior art Figure 1.

§103 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 3, 10-15, 23-28, 31, 38-43, 46 and 53-58 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(b) as being unpatentable over Ekstedt et al.

Applicant believes these claims are allowable for the reasons expressed above, and are further allowable as dependent on allowable base claims as explained above. Further, applicant respectfully requests that reference showing each element of rejected claims be cited pursuant to M.P.E.P. §2144.03, and objects to the single reference §103 rejection.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney at (612) 349-9581 to facilitate prosecution of this application.

If necessary, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0743

Respectfully submitted,

SERGEY A. VELICHKO ET AL.

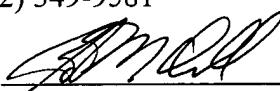
By their Representatives,

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By


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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail, in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this 28th day of January, 2004.

Name

Amy Moriarty

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